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ABSTRACT

Career may be defined as a course of continued progress in the life of a person. Since in the recent history of mankind, one's life has been largely defined by the work that one does, vocation or occupation has become the colloquial connotation for career. In the social order which is emerging, work may no longer be central, but may give way to other processes as the critical concerns of life; and our concept of career will be closer to the above definition. The educational tasks faced by the United States have been greatly complicated by three revolutionary developments in our society: (1) the explosion in the quantity and complexity of knowledge available to man; (2) emerging transition from an industrial society to a technological, cybernetic society; and, (3) the emergence of radical changes in the realms of political awareness, patterns of social organization, explicit values, and economic potential. To enable our educational efforts to match the demands of these developments, attention must be focused on remodeling the concepts and structure of education so that schools of the future will not only be more appropriately aligned with the needs of that future society, but will also be a positive force in facilitating societal transition. Society should thus give attention to five specific educational goals: (1) mastery of basic communication skills; (2) problem solving; (3) the management of knowledge; (4) employment leisure and continuing education; and, (5) self-management. (Author/JM)

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Broadening the Concept of Career Education

by Edmund W. Gordon

In a paper which has reached much too limited an audience, Sidney Marland has made an eloquent plea for the expansion and enhancement of the comprehensive high school to insure that all young people leave the secondary school with generic competence in general education and specific mastery of some area of vocational education.[1] The paper speaks primarily to the need for the development of assessment instruments and procedures by which such competence and mastery may be measured and recorded. However, it is in this paper that Marland used the term career entry to refer to the transition from the truly comprehensive high school to post high school study and/or work. Implicit in that paper is a concern for the achievement of a high degree of symmetry in the attention given to intellectual and vocational development. Both were seen as crucial elements in the educational process, but the latter had traditionally been given second class status. The opportunities for the schools to reward wider varieties of talent, to develop curricula that had greater relevance for a wider range of pupils, and at the same time to contribute to the nation's pool of trained labor were given emphasis. It is out of this kind of thinking that the current concern with career education, also introduced by Marland, has emerged.

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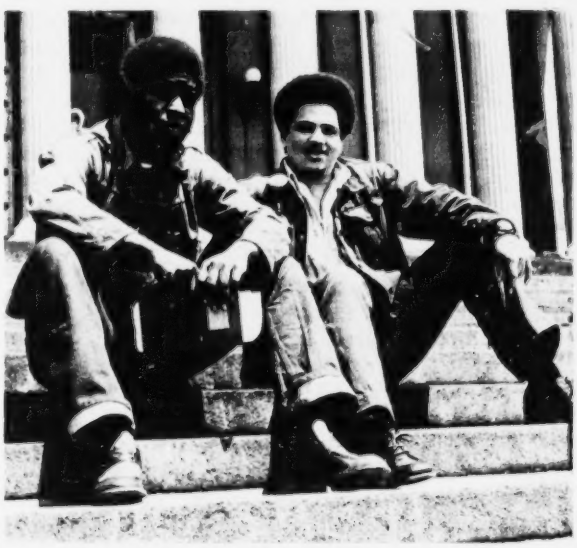

Photograph by Leonard Cohen

Three factors, however, have contributed to too narrow a view of career education. First, we have traditionally considered all basic education which includes vocational skill mastery as a specific goal to be vocational education. Second, in an effort at redressing the balance to give greater status to preparation for work, the employability potential of the products of career education has been overemphasized. Third, the traditional reservations held by academicians for anything that smacks of vocational education has enabled its experts to preempt early developments in the emergence of career education.

In the review of much of the contemporary thinking relative to career education, one finds a heavy emphasis given to concern for vocational education and development. As recently as 1971,

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in searching the Educational Index for references to career education, one is referred to vocational education as if the terms are synonymous. In some discussions of the concept, career education takes on different meanings depending on the level of schooling at which it is introduced. For example, in the primary grades career education would involve introduction to some of the categories of work experience available in the immediate community; in the middle grades youngsters are likely to be exposed to guests who are representatives of varieties of vocations. It is also at that level that some attention might be given to attitudes toward work and exposure to some of the tools and instruments associated with categories of work. At the high school level, youngsters would be expected to master the skills of at least one marketable occupation. There have been some efforts at broadening the concept so as to include college bound as well as non-college bound pupils. In this scheme it is proposed that effort be directed at the achievement of competencies in the content of general education as well as mastery of a marketable skill. Graduates of such programs (very much like the comprehensive high school) could go on to college, gain admission to technical institutes, or enter the labor force. In each of these prevailing concepts, the concern with vocational skill and employability is prominent. However, it may well be that none of these concepts is appropriately responsive to the problems of the society in which the young people we are now training will live. If this is true, a broader conception of career education is indicated.

Career may be defined as a course of continued progress in the life of a person. Since in the recent history of mankind, one's life has been largely defined by the work that one does, vocation or occupation has become the colloquial connotation for career. In the social order which is emerging, work may no longer be central, but may give way to other processes as the critical concerns of life. In such a social order, our conception of career will be closer to the definition, broadly concerned with continued progress throughout the life span, requiring attention to the multifaceted life of man.

Let us examine the direction in which our society is moving and identify some of the implicit educational goals to which schooling must be sensitive. The educational tasks faced by the United States have been greatly complicated and enlarged by three revolutionary developments in our society:

(1) the explosion in the quantity and complexity of knowledge available to man.

(2) emerging transition from an industrial society to a technological, cybernetic society.

(3) the emergence of radical changes in the realms of political awareness, patterns of social organization, explicit values, and economic potential.

In almost every discipline or category of knowledge, we are beginning to recognize overlapping concepts, parallels, and dependencies which make many of the simplistic concepts of the past now appear to be infinitely complex. Postulates that were once accepted as fact have been brought under serious questioning and many can hardly be stated without extensive qualification. In addition, the mass of knowledge available to man is thought to double itself about every ten years. In the United States some 33,000 new books are published each year, and close to a million articles, reports and scientific papers are produced. The effect of such complexity and magnitude is confounded by its ready availability and often burdensome dissemination as a function of a phenomenally efficient communication system. This vast amount of knowledge and high prospect of its continual growth have important implications not only for what is learned but also how we learn it.

Recent advances in technology which are rapidly enabling us to combine the power of the machine with the capabilities of the computer are ushering us into the cybernetic era. The changes which will be forced upon the society as a result of this transition from the industrial era to the cybernetic era are likely to be more challenging and dislocating than the transition from the agricultural era into the industrial era. Not only will the means of production be changed, but man's involvement in it may be all but eliminated. The industrial era placed greater demands on man for skill, and reduced his need for strength. The cybernetic era may reduce man's need for skill and greatly increase man's need for mental facility. The industrial era changed the form of man's labor from idiosyncratic nurturance and crafting to homogeneous and repetitious manipulation. The cybernetic era may not only completely change the nature of man's work but could eliminate work as an essential human function. The implications of these changes will greatly influence education and practically all other aspects of our society.

As societies become more complex and congested, political processes become more intricate, and the requirement for politicalization becomes almost essential to survival. The growing political awareness and social action of significant segments of the society is but a reflection of this phenomenon. As a result of this politicalization and other pressures, patterns of social organization are in a considerable state of flux, with old foci and institutions giving way to new ones and sometimes none. In addition, institutional ties are being severed, and alienation is prevalent.

Photograph by Leonard Cohen

Search for identity in a society where "institutional ties are being severed, and alienation is prevalent."

In this period of increasingly rapid change, old values are surrendering to new, contradictions between professed and practiced values are becoming more obvious, and conflicts between values are more disruptive. Among the contradictions, none is more obvious than the fact of hunger and poverty in the midst of affluence. This discrepancy in the distribution of society's wealth is maintained by our technological developments that have brought us to a point where our potential productivity is almost unlimited. Such conditions in the presence of high economic potential could become the basis for radical changes in the political economy of the nation. Prediction of the direction of change is difficult, but the existence of such circumstances make obsolete many aspects of traditional cultures as well as the current predominant trend toward political and social conservatism.

To enable our educational efforts to match the demands of these developments, attention must be focused on remodeling the concepts and structure of education so that schools of the future will not only be more appropriately aligned with the needs of that future society, but will also be a positive force in facilitating societal transition. The vast amount of knowledge available to man, together with the demands of the advanced technology by which our society moves will require of our student-future-citizens skill in the management of knowledge; just as changes in the politico-social sphere will make more necessary than ever before, competencies and skill in intrapersonal management and interpersonal relations.

A society which approaches education with these concerns might appropriately give attention to five specific educational goals.

1. Mastery of basic communication skills: Education for all in our society must be built upon the mastery of basic skills in symbolic representation and utilization. The survival tools of the cybernetic era are communication skills including speech, reading, writing and arithmetic computation.

2. Problem solving: The movement from anxiety, confusion and disorder to problem formulation involves competence in the analysis of data and experience leading first to problem identification followed by competence in the synthesis of concepts and postulates, to the end that strategic approaches to problem solution may be generated.

3. The management of knowledge: Knowledge of the physical, biological, and social sciences is so vast as to preclude complete content mastery by any single person. Knowledge of the dimensions of these fields, mastery of their principles, skill in the creation or discovery of order or pattern in their data, and competence in the management and utilization of this knowledge are urgently needed competencies. The emerging technology for the retrieval and technical management of information make knowledge content

mastery a far less compelling goal for our citizens of the future.

4. Employment, leisure and continuing education: Robert Theobald sees the world of the future as one where achievement through physical work will no longer be a prime requirement in our society.[2] Utilization of leisure will emerge as a central problem. Rapidly changing technology is destroying the life-time career in a single vocation. Today's children may as adults often change not only jobs but also kinds of work and will be required to make quick adaptation to radically different work situations. The demand will be for trainability and continuing education throughout one's life-span. However, if some of the projections hold true, many of today's young people as adults will live in a society which no longer rewards physical work. The new society may reward, instead, self-expression through art, through interaction with nature, through social interchange, and through symbolization and ideation as art forms. Creative self-expression may become important for vocational utilization as well as for aesthetic purposes.

Photograph by Leonard Cohen

"...involvement in self-fulfilling activities is essential to the living of a meaningful and satisfying life."

5. Self-management: The achievement of goals such as these will involve the schools in activities more explicitly directed at personal, social, and character development. It may require a more adequate understanding of self and others than is usually achieved. It may make essential, wider adaptations to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. It may require a high degree of flexibility and capacity to accommodate to change as a primary survival tool. It may give added urgency to conflict resolution through avenues of non-violence and the development of appreciative and respectful relationships with the worlds of nature, of man-made objects, of ideas and of values. Thus the crucial demand for competence may be in self management.

The achievement of a high degree of communicative skill, skill in seeking and managing information, and competence in the transfer of knowledge and skills to new situations requires school systems to focus on a wide variety of developmental needs of students rather than on more specialized content and skill mastery. In this context career education is perceived not as a substitute for some other aspect of education or as an appendage to the existing content, but as an integral part of all basic educational programs. Career education must be concerned more with facilitating the processes of living and less with the preparation for making a living—more with the development of a meaningful life than with earning a good livelihood. This view of education, then, does not involve a separate emphasis on one's educational or vocational development, but a comprehensive concern with career development, in which "career" is defined as the course by which one develops and lives a responsible and satisfying life.

By defining "career" in terms of man's life-span, we must include one's role as a learner, producer, citizen, family member, consumer, as well, for example, as one's role as a social-political being. Throughout the lifespan these roles are in a constant state of change in relative importance. At one point, an individual may perceive the role of a citizen as his highest priority. At another time, the role of producer may be most important. Although the assignment of permanent pre-eminence to any one of these roles must be avoided, temporary emphasis on one or another may be justified. In that sense some concern with vocational education may be justified since the vocational role is one for which we must prepare (at least in the immediate future). However, vocational skill development may be inappropriate for long-term goal fulfillment. It is no longer appropriate to focus entirely one's vocational skills and role, for it may be appropriate to too small a portion of the human life span. One's career should be concerned with several other roles. Preparation for all of these roles is essential so that one could move in and out of work, politics, institutions; relate in a variety of settings; utilize knowledge and skill for appropriate social adjustments; assign values and make choices in unanticipated situations requiring decisons; and develop appreciation for aesthetic and humane values in preparation for many roles as an expressive and compassionate being.

One of the reasons for this shift in concern is

the fact that man increasingly devotes less of his time to the production of things and services and more to leisure. Leisure is thought of as the varying periods in the life span when one is free from the requirements of productive work or service and free to devote energies to voluntary self-expression. In leisure, gratification comes from doing things relevant to one's own voluntary pursuit of life's idiosyncratic meanings. Thus, one's involvement in self-fulfilling activities is essential to the living of a meaningful and satisfying life.

In earlier stages of our society, most people were able to give meaning to their lives through the work of their vocations. For many, the search for meaning and satisfaction was not engaged. The society did not extend that privilege to them. But one of the contradictions of the present period which is likely to extend into the next, is to be found in societal conditions which constantly stimulate man to search for meaning and satisfaction, but which provide limited resources for fulfilling that search. What is the essential ingredient necessary to the living of a meaningful and satisfying life? Probably nothing is more important to this process than is *intellect.* It is through man's intellect that all else becomes possible. It is the development of intellect that has enabled man to rise above lower forms of animal life. It is also intellect which prevents man from being reduced to robot status by the technology of his own creation. Yet it is the intellect of man which receives so little attention in almost all our efforts at schooling.

According to Anthony Wallace, what a man should learn is a function of his culture.[3] What is expected of education depends upon whether it occurs in a revolutionary, conservative or reactionary society. No society is exclusively based on one of these value orientations, although one does predominate in a given group during a particular period. According to Wallace, any one society will repeatedly progress through this tripartite cycle of revolutionary, conservative, and reactionary stages.

A particular philosophy of education, which determines what is to be learned, is associated with each stage. Priorities for learning are assigned and classified into three categories: the development of intellect — the ability to critically analyze transmitted culture to generate or create something more; the development of morality—capability of establishing values and discerning meaning from them; the development of skills—the mechanics or operations used to achieve morality, intellect and productivity. It is interesting to note that none of the stages (revolutionary, conservative, or reactionary) rank intellect as the top learning priority for the society.

Learning priorities for a revolutionary society support a process of cultural transformation by converting the population to a new code of morality, as its primary concern. The first task for this society is to fill positions of leadership with intellectually resourceful people who adhere to the new morality. These personnel are designated to develop and carry out a program that will convert the populace to its revolutionary ethic. Intellect serves a secondary but important function in a stage of cultural, moral transformation.

In a conservative society since code formation is established, intellect has no special use or political influence. Schools have no reason to emphasize intellect, and responsibility for intellectual education is left to the individual. Pseudo-intellectualism and pretentious amateurs flood academia with incompetencies. The pure intellect utilizes his talents in contributing to amoral production of new weapons, new philosophies, and new curricula. The system rewards technological advancement and places technical skill training as the highest educational priority, and intellect, that is separated from morality, as the lowest.

In a post-conservative or reactionary society, learning is centered around two matters: (1) renewal of enthusiasm for a once pure, revolutionary morality, (2) suppression of contradictory doctrine. It should be noted that a common phenomenon in revolutionary and reactionary societies is the paramount concern with morality. However, there are severe discrepancies in their designs for achieving it. In the former, morality and intellect are viewed jointly to achieve predetermined behavior; while in the latter, intellect is viewed as an enemy. In the conservative society, intellect is simply ignored. Most alarming, however, is that a moral or skill-based education is forced upon the young at the expense of personal and intellectual develop-

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ment. Clearly, then, it seems that in all stages of societal development technique and socialization are stressed while intellectual cultivation is assigned low priority.

For the emerging social order it is crucially important that the paradigm described by Wallace be changed to insure that the development of intellect be raised to the highest priority. Skills and imposed morality will leave man insufficiently equipped to deal with the most critical problems of twenty-first century man. Even now, the advanced technology of modern communications has created a condition in which the contradictions of complex social orders, the atrocities of interpersonal, intertribal, and international conflicts, the inequities inherent in practically all of our social systems, as well as the richness of our cultural and technical accomplishments constantly bombard the human spirit with relentless assault and stimulation. Human beings, accustomed to far simpler social environments, have reacted to these inputs with habituation or adaptation. As these inputs increase in complexity and intensity, the process of habituation is likely to accelerate, and the processes of adaptation must become more complex. These processes are reflected in growing insensitivity to social and moral indignation or shock, increasing insulation and isolation in personal-social interchange, alienation from the concepts, institutions and affiliations which heretofore have provided stabilizing points of reference, and disaffection or loss of a sense of faith in nature, in society, in authority figures, or in oneself as continuing influential forces.

Under such conditions the survival of man will increasingly depend on the capacity of man to use his intellectual power to adapt to his changing environment as well as on his ability to adapt the environment to his special needs. Such capacities are likely to be the product of learning experiences designed to cultivate the mind and spirit of man in ways which combine competence in the use of knowledge, compassionate and empathetic appreciation of values, and mastery of selected skills. It is then these three which must comprise the dimensions of career education—education which prepares for continued progress in the life of a person. Obviously, such an education must be concerned with mastery of basic communication skills; competence in problem solving; competence in the management of knowledge; preparation for continuing education, employment, and leisure; and competence in self management. The specific content to be emphasized will vary as the emphases of the society change. For a number of years that content will probably include some concern with mastery of a marketable skill along with other content specialties. However, if that education is appropriately managed, it will not have as its purpose mastery of that specific skill or content. Its purpose will be to use that content as the vehicle by which intellectuality—the capacity to understand and to adapt—is developed and enhanced. For if career education, or any education, does not do that, it is inadequate education.

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[1] Sidney P. Marland, Jr., "A Proposal for a Universal System of Testing for Job Entry," *Report of the Commission on Tests* (Vol. II). New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970.

[2] Robert Theobald, *Free Man and Free Markets.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1963

[3] Anthony C. Wallace, "Schools in Revolutionary and Conservative Societies," *Social and Cultural Foundations of Guidance.* Esther M. Lloyd-Jones and Nora Rosenau, eds. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, p. 196.

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